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## *Friendship For Russians*

A number of distinguished Americans—distinguished, among other things, for their realism about the Soviet Union and their unrelenting opposition to American Communists—have formed an organization to promote friendship with the Russian people “over the heads of the Kremlin regime.” Calling themselves “Friends of Fighters for Russian Freedom,” they set forth two objectives—to mobilize American support for anti-Communist elements inside Russia and to provide material aid for refugees from that land and for Red army deserters. Behind these purposes lies the same sound impulse that led Senator Brien McMahon recently to propose a Senate resolution (which Secretary Acheson the other day commented most heartily) expressing the friendship of this country for the Russian people as distinct from their despotic and aggressive government.

There is need for expressions of this sort both for the clarification of American thinking on the subject and for a rectification of America's position as interpreted by the rest of the free world. The notion has become current abroad—fanned energetically by Soviet propaganda—that we are implacable foes of everything Russian and likely to embark upon a war as a result of our unreasoning hatred. We have no doubt that this is very far from the feeling of most Americans. As a people we have an abhorrence of all forms of tyranny—in part because we know that dictatorship, whether of the so-called right or the so-called left, degrades the human spirit; in part because we know, too, that dictatorships are made inevitably dangerous to free

peoples by reason of the inner tensions that compel them to seek expansion.

But love of liberty is a universal human attribute. The fatal weakness of dictatorships is that, however rigid their rule, men living under them will always seek an opportunity to escape or to revolt. Many are doubtless seeking such an opportunity behind the Iron Curtain today. There is ample evidence of it from those who have been able to cross the line and seek asylum among free men. (You don't find men going the other way.) They deserve asylum when their good faith can be established; they deserve the friendship of the free; they deserve a helping hand and a word of hope—not alone for their sake but for our own as well. The enmity of America is toward oppression—not toward the victims of oppression.

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